

An abstract painting by Carlos Mérida, featuring bold, geometric shapes and a vibrant color palette of green, blue, brown, and white. The composition is dynamic and non-representational, with thick, expressive brushstrokes and sharp, angular forms. The colors are applied in large, flat areas, creating a sense of depth and texture. The overall effect is one of rhythmic movement and visual complexity.

English

**AMERICAN
ABSTRACTION.
CARLOS MÉRIDA**

Museo Ralli Marbella

"A painting, a picture, must be an organism that is completely detached from any literary interpretation; in itself, it constitutes a relationship between forms. The emotion must come directly from the painting itself as a structure, presupposing form and colour."

"Abstract painting starts directly from reality – space, time –, but the conclusions it makes go beyond this attribute. However, its meaning, its value, the emotion it projects, what it says, should be sought within itself."

"Abstract painting is, therefore, materialistic, idealistic and realistic at the same time; its message should be based on its intrinsic conditions, and not on affinities, similarities or analogies."

"The potentially recognisable aspect of the work is part of the painter's intention when dissociating and reassociating the realities that serve as the basis for the painting. We observe this type of dissociation and reassociation in the most beautiful examples of ancient pre-Columbian art, in Black art, in Picasso's painting, in the work of Cezanne."



Carlos Mérida,
Abstracción y Americanismo (México, 1957)



*A Poem to the
Sacred Book I*
(1978)

American Abstraction. *Carlos Mérida*

The exhibition *American Abstraction* shows nine lithographs by the Guatemalan artist Carlos Mérida, belonging to the album of engravings “A Poem to the Sacred Book”. They embody his concept of language based on geometric shapes and his close relationship with the indigenous world of the pre-Hispanic heritage.

The album of engravings, which originally consists of ten works of which nine are shown, was produced in 1978 from fragments of texts taken from the Sacred Book of the maya or Popol Vuh, which narrates the history and cosmogony of the Maya-Quiché lineage.

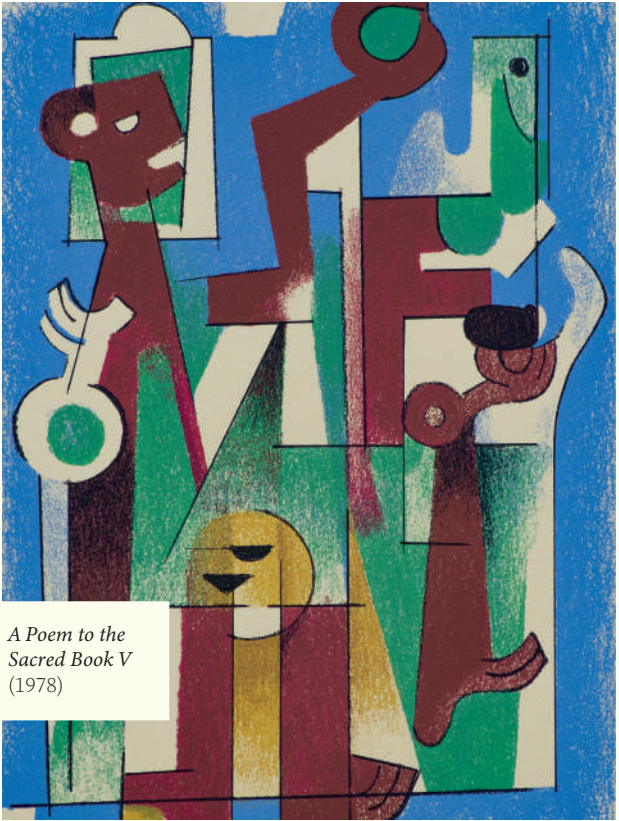
Carlos Mérida (Guatemala, 1891 – Mexico, 1984) began his artistic training in his country of birth and soon travelled to Europe in 1912, where he spent time in Spain and France. Two years later he returned to the Americas and quickly established himself as a painter, holding solo exhibitions in Guatemala, Paris and New York. He settled in Mexico in 1919 and became closely linked to the country's art, so much so that he is considered an indisputable part of the history of Mexican art.

With a brief period involved in muralism and with the artist Diego Rivera, working together on the latter's murals, Mérida moved away from the approach of the School of Mexican Painting and proposed a new national art related to the pre-Columbian heritage and formalist theories of art. Along these lines, he is more associated with the proposal also offered by Rufino Tamayo, although with the difference that Tamayo did not fully reach abstraction, unlike Mérida.

Mérida's work evolved from figurative and narrative beginnings in which he represents the tradition and daily life of native cultures, to geometric abstraction based on pre-Columbian elements. This language is considered one of Carlos Mérida's great contributions to art, to which can also be added his ethnographic work in recovery and research into indigenous traditions linked to dance, as well as his proposals in architecture and integrated art.

Mérida's originality lies in the way he envisions an artwork as a construction, and not a representation, in which poetry is the essence. For him, art must be based on reality, on nature, not imitating it but rather developing in parallel with it, creating a new subjective universe where the elements lose their prior meaning to become a purely poetic and aesthetic object.

In this sense, the lithographs that make up this exhibition must be understood as visual poetry, rather than as illustrations of texts from the sacred book which were intended to offer new versions containing the essence of the poem that makes up the text.



*A Poem to the
Sacred Book V*
(1978)

In Mérida's own words, "The fragments of the text that serve as the theme for the lithographs in this album were taken from Adrián Recinos' version [...]. They concentrate their extraordinary realm into a few lines and place us within their very spirit, where the lithographs aspire to originate. Our purpose was not to create an illustration or an allegory, but to penetrate the mythological prodigy in order to nourish ourselves and offer very free versions that have something of the poem's character."

His notion of plastic art had a great deal to do with his initial musical training (which he had to give up due to hearing problems), his Maya-Quiché heritage and his contact with European avant-garde movements, especially Cubism, Surrealism and abstract art.

Throughout his career Carlos Mérida employed a wide variety of techniques in his work, including oil paint, watercolour, gouache, pencil, parchment, plastic, glass, ceramics and tempera.

Free entrance

Opening times

Tuesday to Friday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Closed

From 22 Dec. to 22 Jan.

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How to get

· By bus. Lines 1, 76, 79, 78

(Hotel Coral Beach stop)

· Walking. The Ralli Museums has a direct access from the seafront, just 50 metres away

· Own vehicle. The surroundings of the museum have free parking areas

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